

MOMENTUM

Your source for news about efforts to Improve I-70

Most Missourians agree that improving I-70 across the state is a much needed effort, and one that will enhance our safety, prosperity and quality of life. But many question where, when and how improvements will be made. Where in the corridor would improvements be made first? When will MoDOT find the funding needed to make major I-70 improvements? And how can I-70 be widened and reconstructed without shutting down traffic for years on end? Answering these implementation questions is a central part of the Improve I-70 program.

Where? In addition to determining the basic location and configuration of I-70 improvements, current studies also will determine short-term and long-range implementation plans. The plans will take into account safety needs, bridge and pavement conditions and capacity needs to determine priority areas for I-70 improvements. *More on page 3.*

When? It all comes down to funding. While MoDOT spends millions each year to maintain I-70, no funding is available for major improvements. Ultimately, widening and reconstructing the facility will require funding beyond MoDOT's current levels. *See page 2 for more details about funding.*

How? Closing I-70, even for an hour, can have devastating impacts on travel. That's why widening and reconstruction

efforts will be done in a way that keeps four travel lanes open at all times. *See graphics that explain MoDOT's construction phasing on page 4.*

Overall Status

A number of public events, including meetings, drop-in centers and workshops, were held across the I-70 corridor in April and May, 2003. The events provided the latest information on potential I-70 improvements, and were held in six of the seven geographic areas under study (public events are expected in Section 1 later this summer). Nearly 1,000 people attended the events, reviewed information and provided their views. Status reports on section activities are available on pages 5-11, or on the project Web site at www.ImproveI70.org. Also available on the Web site are the exhibits shown at all public meetings. Click on the section of interest to you, then click "maps and graphics" or "news" on the section page.

Based on input received at the meetings, Improve I-70 team members are making refinements, gathering information and developing more detailed I-70 improvement plans. A number of public events are expected in the fall, and are detailed on the next page.



Calendar of Events

Few public events are expected in the coming months, with more activity occurring later this fall. All events are or will be publicized on the project Web site and through special mailings. If you receive this newsletter by mail, you will be notified by mail of any public events in your section. If you have questions, or know others who should be included on the mailing list, please contact the project office at 1-800-590-0066.

Section 1 *Independence to Odessa:* A public meeting is expected this fall. The date, time and location will be publicized on the project Web site and through a special mailing to those within the section.

Section 2 *Route 131 to Route 5:* No public events are planned at this time.

Section 3 *Boonville to Rocheport:* No public events are planned at this time.

Section 4 *Route BB to Eastern Columbia:* Advisory group meetings will resume in September, and a public meeting is expected this fall. The date, time and location of the meetings will be publicized on the project Web site. A special public meeting notice will be mailed to those within the section.

Section 5 *Route Z to U.S. 54:* No public events are planned at this time, although the section may be represented at public meetings to be held in Columbia (Section 4) and Kingdom City (Section 6) this fall.

Section 6 *Kingdom City to Montgomery City:* Public events are expected this fall. The date, time and location will be publicized on the project Web site and through a special mailing to those within the section.

Section 7 *Route 19 to Lake St. Louis:* Public meetings are expected this fall. The date, time and location will be publicized on the project Web site and through a special mailing to those within the section.

Finding the Funding

Preliminary estimates indicate as much as \$3 billion in today's dollars would be needed to widen and reconstruct I-70 between Independence and Lake St. Louis. While that's a daunting figure, it is also somewhat deceiving. That's because major improvements to I-70 will be made in a gradual way over the course of many years. So the question is not how to find \$3 billion, but rather, how best to fund the improvements over time with the money available.

MoDOT spends money each year on I-70, conducting maintenance activities and making limited improvements. In the past five years, about \$87 million was spent on the rural portions of I-70, and that general level of spending will likely continue into the future. In addition to maintenance and resurfacing projects, in recent years motorists have seen installation of guard cable barriers in the median of I-70 to improve safety. More projects of this type are on the horizon (*see the story on page 12*).

But major widening and reconstruction of I-70 will require increases in state and federal funding beyond MoDOT's current levels. And with transportation funding a moving target at both the state and federal level, it is unclear how much of the Improve I-70 program will be implemented in the coming years. Having a plan in place now, however, will ensure that any improvements made in the coming years are compatible with the long-term vision of I-70.

The Improve I-70 studies currently underway are producing more detailed cost estimates, and MoDOT is developing a number of implementation strategies based on various funding scenarios. Together these efforts will determine where and to what extent major I-70 improvements could be made. Ultimately, MoDOT will implement the long term program of I-70 improvements to the extent it can afford with the funds available.

Developing a Priority Plan

While available funding will dictate how much of the Improve I-70 program can move forward, other factors will influence where improvements are made. MoDOT is in the process of identifying the areas where improvements are needed most. Four basic factors are being considered in developing a priority plan: safety needs, bridge conditions, pavement conditions and capacity needs.

Poorly functioning interchanges in Kingdom City, Columbia, Odessa, Oak Grove and other areas can create dangerous situations when traffic backs up on exit ramps onto the main I-70 lanes. Narrow inside and outside shoulders can be found along much of I-70, compromising driver safety and complicating incident management by allowing little room to keep traffic moving when collisions occur. Railroad crossings and severe curves in areas such as High Hill and Wentzville also contribute to safety needs.

There are 13 condition-3 (serious) and condition-4 (poor) bridges along the I-70 corridor. Based on a 9-point scale, with nine being excellent and zero signifying a bridge that is out of service and beyond corrective action, these bridges are in need of major repair in the short term. Improve I-70 studies

are determining how to rehabilitate or replace these structures in a way that fits with the long-term design envisioned for I-70.

I-70 has some of the oldest pavement on the interstate system with nearly half of it rated as poor or very poor. While there have been numerous projects to rehabilitate, resurface and reconstruct portions of the roadway, conditions remain less than ideal.

The Kansas City, Columbia and St. Louis areas are clear priorities in terms of capacity

needs. These urban areas currently experience traffic volumes that exceed I-70's capacity. By the year 2030, 100 percent of the I-70 corridor is expected to experience traffic volumes that exceed capacity if no improvements are made.

Using information collected through the Improve I-70 studies, along with input from the public and community leaders, MoDOT's priority plan will determine where I-70's safety, bridge, pavement and capacity needs are most pressing.

MoDOT will balance safety needs, bridge and pavement conditions and capacity needs in developing a priority plan for long-term I-70 improvements.



Wide Median Keeps Traffic Moving

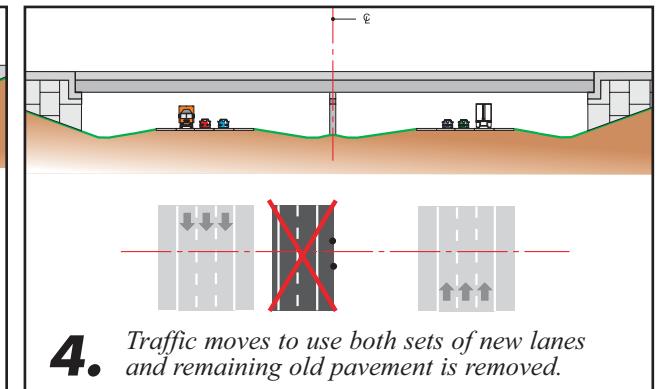
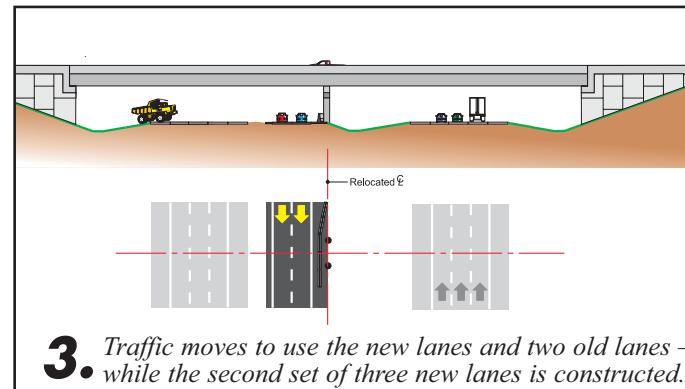
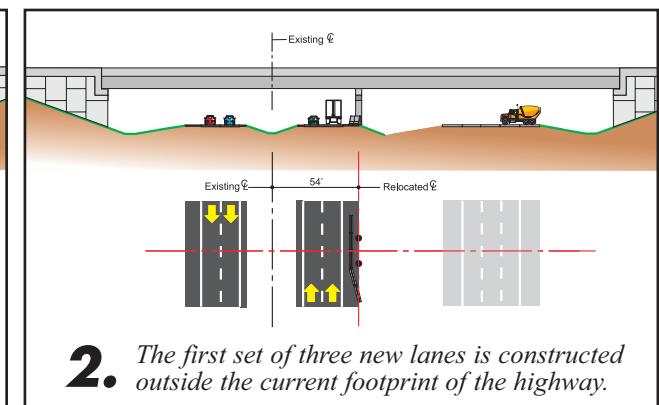
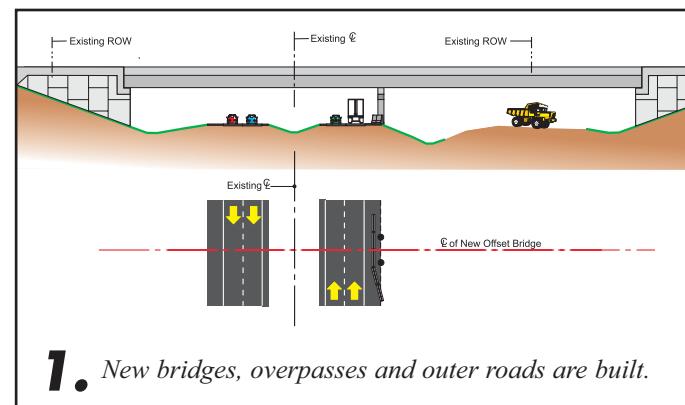
The importance of keeping traffic moving during construction of major I-70 improvements is overwhelmingly clear. Consider what happens on I-70 today when even a minor accident occurs or when routine maintenance is performed. Loss of one lane causes significant back-ups and delays. With closure of more than one lane, impacts to travel quickly become intolerable and ripple throughout the state and local system of roads.

Keeping four lanes of traffic open during construction has been a primary MoDOT concern, and is the reason a rebuilt I-70 will have an extra wide median in the rural sections of the corridor. The wide median allows construction of I-70 improvements to be staged in a way that keeps four lanes of traffic open – as there are today. This has a tremendous benefit for the traveling public, and reduces user costs during the construction process. The graphics to the right show how it works along the rural areas of I-70.

In the urban areas of the corridor, where a concrete median barrier will be used to separate the opposing lanes instead of a wide

median, maintenance of traffic during construction will be measurably more difficult. Likewise, interchange areas will require special consideration. Crossroad and turning traffic will likely use detours, temporary ramp connections to I-70 and the outer roads during construction.

During the Improve I-70 studies, construction staging plans will be developed to answer the questions above, and determine the most efficient, economical and timely way to make major I-70 improvements while keeping traffic moving.



ON The Move

Section status reports

The following pages provide detailed status reports for each section of I-70 under study. If you have questions about Improve I-70 activities, contact the project office at 1-800-590-0066.

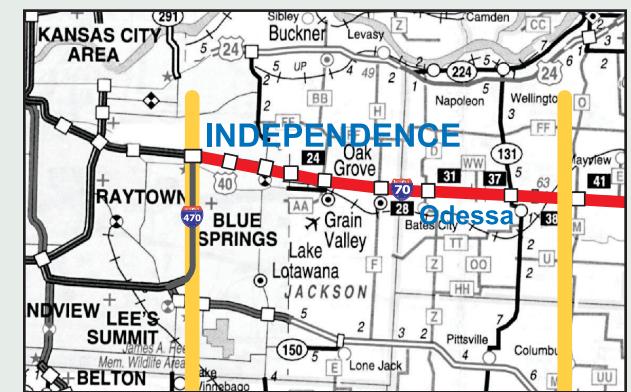
Section 1

Independence to Odessa

In the eastern portion of Section 1 (Odessa to Oak Grove), the study team is in the process of determining if widening and reconstruction should occur to the north or south of existing I-70, and is developing preliminary interchange alternatives. As the preliminary alternatives are developed, the team will be meeting with local community leaders to discuss the designs' compatibility with local needs and development patterns. Later this fall, as the alternatives become more refined, the team will host a public meeting to discuss the alternatives and solicit citizen input.

In the western portion of Section 1 (between Oak Grove and Independence), the nearly complete I-70 Major Investment Study will lay the groundwork for the Section 1 Team to complete more detailed, preliminary designs for I-70. (See www.i70mis.org for more information on the Jackson County I-70 MIS.)

As those preliminary alternatives are developed, the team again will be meeting with local leadership and, ultimately, the public. The team anticipates those meetings will happen in the later part of 2003. If you have questions or concerns about activities in Section 1, please call the project hot line at 1-800-590-0066.





Section 2

Odessa to Boonville

Public meetings were held in Concordia and Blackwater on April 15 and 16, 2003 to provide study information and gather public input. More than 160 people attended the meetings where a map of the proposed location for I-70 widening between Odessa and Boonville was displayed. Widening is recommended on the north side of existing I-70 from Odessa through Sweet Springs, then will shift to the south about 2.5 miles east of Sweet Springs and remain south to Boonville.

Also shown at the meetings were preliminary options for improving interchanges. Interchanges will remain at their current general location and no new interchanges are expected. Exhibits shown at the public meetings, including maps of interchanges, are available on the project Web site at www.ImproveI70.org, or by calling the project hot line at 1-800-590-0066.

The interchange improvement alternatives will be refined based on public input received at the April meetings and through small-group discussions to be held this summer. The Section 2 Team will then evaluate the benefits and impacts of the alternatives based on engineering, traffic, environmental and socio-economic factors. Public events could take place later this year to display the refined alternatives and share information about their benefits and impacts.

All information developed by the Section 2 Team will be presented through an Environmental Assessment document expected to be available early next year. An official public hearing will be held next spring to gather input about the study's findings and recommended preferred alternative. If you have questions or concerns about activities in Section 2, please call the project hot line at 1-800-590-0066.

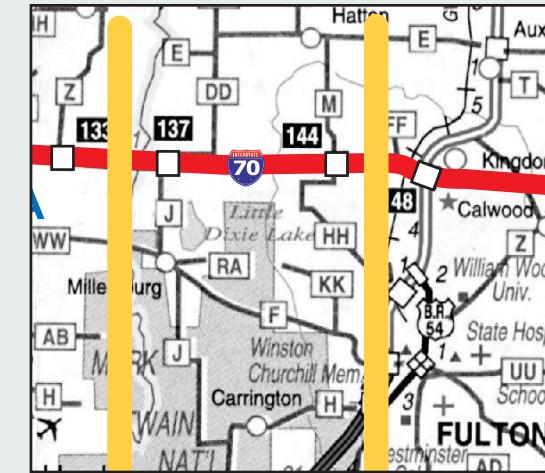
4 Team and MoDOT in making corridor decisions. Exhibits shown at the public meeting are available on the project Web site at www.ImproveI70.org, or by calling the project office at 1-800-590-0066.

With corridor screening complete, the Section 4 Team is now developing and evaluating specific alignments and interchange concepts within the Existing Corridor. The team will gather information on the engineering, traffic, environmental and socio-economic aspects of the alternatives over the next several months. Advisory Group meetings are expected to resume in September, and a public meeting will be held this fall to review the alternatives and discuss their benefits and impacts. If you have questions or concerns about activities in Section 4, please call the project hot line at 1-800-590-0066.

Section 5

Route Z to U.S. 54

Members of the Section 5 Team took part in a public meeting held in Kingdom City (Section 6) on April 2, 2003. At the meeting, three maps displayed the study team's recommendation to widen I-70 on the south side of the existing route from Route Z to an area approximately one mile east of the Route J & DD interchange. Subsequent study has determined this shift should occur approximately four miles further to the east to minimize social and economic impacts. Widening is now recommended to shift from the south to the north approximately one-half mile west of the M/HH interchange. From there, widening would continue on



the north side of I-70 to U.S. 54. The three maps are available on the project Web site at www.ImproveI70.org, or by calling the project office at 1-800-590-0066.

Currently the Section 5 Team is developing initial ideas for improving interchanges in the area while incorporating MoDOT's access management guidelines. The interchange alternatives will be displayed at public events to be held later this year. The date, time and location of the events will be publicized on the project Web site and through a special mailing to those within Section 5. If you have questions or concerns about activities in Section 5, please call the project hot line at 1-800-590-0066.

Guard Cable Adds Safety to Aging Interstate

While the Improve I-70 studies are developing plans for the future of Interstate 70, MoDOT's district offices continue to plan, program and implement annual projects to enhance the facility's safety and manage its condition. The installation of guard cable is one such project.

Several segments of I-70 have experienced rising crossover accident rates in recent years, so MoDOT is using specially allocated safety funds to add guard cable in the median. A project to begin this fall in MoDOT District 4 (Kansas City area) will add guard cable along 41 miles of I-70's median in Lafayette County and eastern Jackson County.

Today's faster vehicles, heavier trucks and greater traffic volumes have necessitated that medians be wider than the 40 feet that was the national standard when

Missouri's older interstate highways were designed in the 1950s and '60s. The addition of guard cable decreases the possibility of crossover accidents.

A team of District 4 engineers is designing the new guard cable system to restore that margin of safety until the day comes when I-70 can be rebuilt with wider medians. Senior Highway Designer Christine Muehlher explains that drawing up plans for the \$5.8 million project must take into account much more than putting lines on paper.

"Three-strand guard cable will be installed in locations where the median is less than 60 feet wide and in other needed areas," Muehlher said. The median profile must be altered to provide both drainage and proper approach angle so that the cables will slow and redirect vehicles striking the system. "Where the slopes are steeper than

6:1, (falls one foot over every six feet), the median will also be graded for proper installation of the cable."

The guard cable is expected to be in place by late 2004.

Other I-70 guard cable projects have either been completed, are in progress, or are planned for areas of Montgomery and Warren Counties. MoDOT has also been proactive with regard to guard cable on Interstates 44, 55, 435 and 270.



Christine Muehlher
Senior Highway Designer, MoDOT

Contact Us

Your questions, comments and concerns about Improve I-70 are always welcome. Contact the Improve I-70 Team by phone at **1-800-590-0066**, by email at **comments@ImproveI70.org**, or by mail at

Improve I-70
P.O. Box 410482
Kansas City, MO 64141

You may also visit our Web site at **www.ImproveI70.org**.
For questions about other MoDOT projects and initiatives, call
1-888-ASK MODOT, or visit **www.modot.org**.

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